22. Public Works.—By spending as much as Rs. 32,82,485 out of the allotment of Rs. 32,92,116 granted to the department in 1100, the Public Works Department has established a record. The permanent restoration, at a cost of more than Rs. 3 lakhs, of the roads and bridges damaged by the floods formed a special feature of the public works carried out during the period under review. The total expenditure on communications amounted to over 66 per cent. of the gross outlay on works and repairs ; and proportionately greater attention was devoted to the improvement of communications in North and Central Travancore. The number of miles of new communications opened throughout the State, including the conversion of traces and village paths into cart roads, was 200 and the number of miles of existing communications improved was 266. The expenditure on Protective Irrigation was Rs. 1,47,397, besides that of Rs. 98,986 on the Kodayar works. The rules relating to ryots' roads, which formed the subject of a non-official resolution in the Legislative Council, are being scrutinised with a view to removing practical difficulties in their operation. A combined scheme for the supply of drinking water and electric light to the town of Trivandrum from Aruvikkarai on the Karamanai river is before the Government and I am hopeful of proceeding with it very soon. The improvement of waterways and the restoration of minor irrigation and drainage works in the Trivandrum taluk and in Central and North Travancore are other schemes in contemplation. The Alleppey-Shertallai canal project has been definitely abandoned.

23. Ports.—Alleppey was suitable for shipping throughout the monsoon in 1100 and thus became an all-the-year port. This fortunate result was brought about by that unaccountable natural phenomenon, the mud bank or bed which, returning after many years, enveloped the port affording safe anchorage in still water irrespective of weather conditions. In these circumstances favourable to shipping the improvement of trade facilities became advisable. Several items of work were carried out at the pier the chief of which was the erection of steam derricks which have considerably helped the handling of goods. Tram lines were renewed, trucks replaced and defects in the pier remedied. Estimates have also now been received for important improvements to the sea-end of the Commercial Canal and the question of a boat-basin has been taken up. A proposal for a jetty at Quilon port is under examination. The provision of more godowns (warehouses) at Trivandrum port and suggestions for more inducements to shipping at this port are being considered.

24. Railways.—The field work for the preliminary survey of the Trivandrum-Nagercoil line, with an alternative alignment through Trivandrum town, has been completed ; and a report of a reconnaissance survey of a line from Quilon to Ernakulam has been obtained. After a detailed traffic survey of the districts affected, proposals have been advanced for the alignment of a main line from Quilon to Mavelikara, Chengannur to Kottayam and Ettumanur and thence direct *via* Talayolapparambu and Trippunittura to Ernakulam, with a wagon-ferry at an intermediate station, Pallam, linking the main line with Alleppey port. A branch line from Ettumanur to Mundakayam at the foot of the Peermade hills may perhaps be treated as an integral part of the project, while another branch from Trippunittura to Muvattupuzha running in the direction of Tattakad or to a point further up the Periyar may be feasible after the main line is completed, either as a feeder line or as part of a larger scheme for affording easy access from the High Range planting districts to the west coast ports. A coast line from Mavelikara *via* Alleppey to Cochin has also been proposed ; but the financial prospects of this can be judged only after seeing how Alleppey fares by the development of the Cochin harbour and how much of the main line traffic is likely to be retained by the waterways. These are all, of course, projects only under contemplation and much will depend upon the results of detailed surveys and other considerations.

Such surveys as have hitherto been undertaken were entrusted to a railway contractor who has been working in Travancore for several years. This gentleman, Mr. G. Marini, has from the 1st February 1926 been appointed for a term of five years as a whole-time Railway Engineer and Adviser to Government for Railways. Mr. Marini has a wide and intimate knowledge of railway matters and his long

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acquaintance with local conditions will prove to be a source of strength to the State in its future programme of railway extension. His appointment will also enable the Government to obtain expert advice on railway matters which are frequently coming up. Railway questions are often intricate and highly technical; and the lack of skilled assistance in handling such matters has been a serious disadvantage in the past.

In January last, I had a meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the South Indian Railway, the Agent of the South Indian Railway and the Government Inspector of Railways, at which various important matters were talked over. The possible loss to the State by the opening of the Virudunagar-Tenkasi chord line, the question of apportionment of rolling stock in respect of which we have been debited with over Rs. 30 lakhs in 1917-23, and certain terms in the existing contracts with the South Indian Railway Company affording room for revision and improvement, were amicably discussed; and I am hopeful that, as a result, arrangements will be come to, to serve the best interests of the State.

25. Public Health.—The office of the Darbar Physician had not been substantively filled up since Dewan Bahadur P. N. Lakshmanan retired in January 1925. On the 14th December 1925 the Government, as an experimental measure, constituted the Administrative Board, Medical Services, to be in immediate charge of the medical administration of the State. The Board is composed of an Inspecting Medical Officer, the the Senior Surgeon, Women's Medical Service, and a non-official member belonging to the medical profession. The association of a non-official in the management of an important department is an innovation in Travancore. I attach very great importance to frequent and thorough inspections of mofussil hospitals and dispensaries in such manner and under such conditions as will enable searching criticism and a correcting hand being applied promptly and on the spot. An officer, like the Darbar Physician, whose constant presence at the capital is necessary, cannot find time for the study of local needs in the matter of medical relief. Furthermore, there is no disguising the fact that medical aid to women and children is not as extented or as organised as it might be. It is these considerations which induced the formation of the Administrative Board at little or no extra cost to the State. Of course, the venture is still in the nature of an experiment; but there are already marked signs of its proving a success.

In the Ayurveda Department ten new *Vaidyasalas* were opened in 1100 and ten more will be established this year. The indigenous system of medicine is receiving encouragement to develop on lines which seem to be right.

26. Education.—The year witnessed a further expansion of education in the State. The number of recognised institutions under the Education Department at the end of 1100 was 3,459, and their strength 4,71,023, showing an increase of 33 schools and 16,558 pupils during the year. There were 18 Government instructional institutions conducted by other departments with a strength of 1,319 pupils, besides private Ayurveda schools and private technical schools with a combined strength of 1,241 pupils. The total expenditure from Government revenues during 1100 on educational objects, including the outlay on educational buildings and on quasi-educational departments, amounted to Rs. 39,88,829, which forms 21·6 per cent of the total expenditure of the State and works out at 27 chackrams 14 cash or nearly one rupee per head of the population. Educational reforms mean additional outlay; and you will agree with me that it may not be possible to provide even for the expansion of the department at the present rate without trenching on the equally paramount needs of other public welfare departments or devising means to place at least a portion of the expenditure, which is heaviest under Vernacular education, on statutory local bodies or otherwise distributing the load. The reconstruction of the present system of literary education to provide a complete and graded course of vocational or technical or practical education has been suggested as a solution of the present problem of unemployment; but that presupposes a new orientation of educational aims. The opening of more professional colleges and of institutions such as village

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libraries and reading rooms for adult education; compulsory education to the end of the primary stage, particularly in respect of the educationally backward and economically dependent communities; the elaboration of a suitable course of studies and the provision of greater educational facilities for women; measures to safeguard and promote the health of school children; and steps to improve the efficiency of teaching in Vernacular and English schools, are only a few of the measures that may have to wait. These are many matters and large. Small reforms are the worst enemies of great reforms. And until a comprehensive scheme of reconstruction is formulated and accepted, I do not intend to break up or tinker with the existing structure. In regard to the larger measure, it should not be long before we have a committee or other competent agency seriously at work. The system of education must follow the genius of the people.

27. Unemployment.—A variety of reasons has led to the unemployment problem being inextricably mixed up with the educational question. I am not surprised. As the administration of the State became more highly organised and more complex from year to year, the need for public servants in many capacities grew rapidly. University degrees and school certificates became the only means of testing fitness for Government employment; and the whole current of our youth set towards the institutions where such qualifications could be procured. Hence our swollen colleges, our multiplicity of schools. Hence this spectre of unemployment. There is no getting away from the fact that the Government are the largest employers of educated labour in Travancore. In so far as there are Government posts available, the Government will continue to distribute them and will continue to afford equality of opportunity to every son of the soil. A change must and will come over the outlook of our people once they have manfully faced the cold hard fact of the struggle for existence. Meantime the Government will leave nothing undone to narrow the margin of unemployment. A progressive railway policy and electric and water supply schemes will open up fresh avenues of useful service.

28. Legislation.—The new Civil Procedure Code and the new Limitation Regulation, which have both come into operation from the 1st Makaram 1101, have brought the law into line with the latest enactments in British India. The two most important Regulations placed on the Statute Book in 1100 were the Nayar and the Ezhava Regulations, socio-economic pieces of legislation fraught with far-reaching consequences to two strong and important communities in the State, and fundamentally altering or affecting their law of inheritance. A similar law in respect of the Nanjinad Vellalas will soon be enacted. The Government have, in response to the demand from the *Misradaya* section of the Ezhavas, extended by three months the period for filing applications under Section 33 (1) of the Ezhava Regulation for exemption from the provisions relating to intestate succession and partition. Another important Regulation passed last year was the Village Panchayat Regulation which is intended to foster and develop local self-government in rural areas.

The first Council constituted under Regulation II of 1097 was dissolved in Kumbham last and the elections to the present Council were held in Edavam. It is an index to the growing interest taken by the people generally in public affairs that, of the 88,251 voters in the 22 constituencies, where alone the seats were contested, 63,720 or as many as 72·21 per cent. polled valid votes and that, in six of the general rural constituencies, more than 94 per cent. of the voters went to the polls.

29. Local Self-government.—The Municipal Councils, 19 in number, are shouldering their civic responsibilities in an increasing measure. The minor roads, lanes, etc., within the municipal areas of Kottayam, Quilon, Changanachery and Vaikam are to be handed over to the Councils as at Nagercoil and Alleppey. From the commencement of the current year, street lighting has been undertaken by the Municipal Council of Trivandrum, as in the remaining towns. The Councils at Attingal, Alwaye, Quilon and Padmanabhapuram are incurring expenditure on educational objects; and a scheme for the devolution of primary education on the Municipal Councils is maturing. Nagercoil has spent some money on the improvement of streets and has also taken up the investigation of a scheme for the supply of good drinking water. The Councils at Alleppey, Quilon and Nagercoil are also financing other measures for the promotion of public health.

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